ROMANCES OF THE RING

True Tales Of Hard-Hitting Heroes Of The Past And Present

(WRITTEN FOR THE FARMER)

FIGHTING JOE COBURN

Early in May of 1863, the sporting resorts of New York, especially those frequented by men of Hibernian blood, were buzzing with excited conversation. The civil war was raging. Lee was threatening to invade the North—as he soon afterward did, to meet defeat at Gettysburg—and a great battle had just been fought at Charleston, in Maryland. All of the talk was of this battle, which, however, had nothing to do with the war.

The battle of Charleston, fought in Maryland, on the fifth of May, 1863, was sanguinary enough, but no guns were used, although a few spectators, in their enthusiasm, did flourish lethal weapons. In short, it was a ring battle with Joe Coburn, of New York and Mike McCoole of St. Louis as the combatants, and the heavyweight championship of America at stake.

At that period the history of the American ring was mainly a record of Irish names—Yankee Sullivan, John C. Heenan, John Morrissey, Jimmie Elliott, Mike McCoole and Joe Coburn being the most prominent among them. When Heenan retired the principal competitors for the honors were Coburn and McCoole, the one representing the East, the other the West.

Although the republic was divided against itself, and engaged in bitter civil strife, the frenzied fanatics of the pugilistic game were filled with enthusiasm by the contest between the giant McCoole and "Fighting Joe" Maryland, was the scene of many of the greatest battles of the early period of American ring history, was again a pugilistic Mecca.

Mike McCoole had little but his size to commend him to the followers of the sport—that, and his gameness. He displayed the latter quality to the fullest extent in the Maryland contest, for, although outclassed by Coburn in nearly every stage of the contest, it was not until sixty-three rounds had been fought that Mike gave in.

Coburn returned to New York to receive the plaudits of his admirers, and for a few weeks he was a greater hero than any general. The man whose name was thus added to the list of American champions was a native of County Armagh, Ireland, where he was born in 1835, but he came to America as a boy and on attaining his majority was naturalized as a citizen of Uncle Sam's country.

Coburn was about twenty-one when he fought his first ring battle. His opponent was Ed Price, long a popular pugilist, and afterward equally noted as a criminal lawyer and dramatist. Price and Coburn fought seventy rounds, lasting over three hours, the fight ending in a draw. In 1857 Coburn took on Harry Gubben, another aspirant to ring laurels, and defeated him in less than half an hour. This affair was for $500 a side.

For several years Coburn remained in retirement, and it was not until the title was left ownerless and was claimed by Mike McCoole that he returned to the game, urged by his friends. By his victory over the St. Louis man-mammoth, Coburn became the acknowledged champion, and there was nobody who dared try conclusions with him. He determined to go after the world's title, and early in 1864 he sent a challenge over to England offering to meet Jem Mace.

The English gypsy accepted the defi, and Joe immediately crossed the pond. The stakes were the then big sum of $5,000, and the match attracted wide attention. Owing to the opposition to the game in England, it was decided to stage the affair on Irish soil, which was of course much to Joe's liking. On the day before the date set for the battle a meeting was held in Dublin to name a referee, but a stormy scene ensued, and no agreement was reached. Mace wanted an English sporting writer for the office, while Coburn's choice was Jim Bowler. Jem and Joe were both obdurate, and when, on the following day, Coburn and his party went out with the ropes and stakes to pitch the ring, Mace was far away. The ring was formed, Coburn entered, and after the stipulated time had elapsed he claimed the stakes and the world's title.

The upshot of the matter was that the stakes were returned, except that Mace had to forfeit $500 toward Coburn's expenses. The "Great Windbag" as the match was called, left a bad taste in the mouths of the English sports who had traveled to Ireland to see the battle, and both Jem and Joe were roundly condemned.

At this period Coburn was the owner of a saloon in Grand street, New York, and had a big following. One of the most enthusiastic of his supporters was George Law, the New York traction and steamship magnate, who, starting life as a mason and stone-cutter, had made a fortune as a contractor, and increased it by investing in many big enterprises. Coburn had no business ability, but as long as Law lived the boxer was never in want.

After the Mace fiasco in Ireland Coburn quit the ring for a time, and the title was fought for by his old enemy McCoole, Jim Dunne, Tom Allen, the Englishman; Aaron Jones, Bill Davis and others.

In 1869 Jem Mace came to America, and was matched to fight Tom Allen in New Orleans. Allen, although an Englishman, had been in America fo some time, and claimed the American title. Joe Coburn went to New Orleans to act as Allen's principal second in the fight with Mace, which was for $10,000. Mace was the victor after a ferocious battle with the raw 'uns.

The victory of Mace aroused the fighting spirit of the Irish-Americans, who were loud in their demands that Coburn retun to the ring and lick the hated Englishman. Joe at length consented, and in 1871 Coburn and Mace were matched to fight in Canada for the American championship and $5,000. This time Coburn failed to appear, owing to the interference of the Canadian authorities, and Mace claimed the money. The stakeholder, Hary Hill, refused to turn over the coin, and after a lot of heated conversation another match was made to be fought "within 100 miles of New Orleans."

Johnny Dwyer, the famous Brooklyn fighter, looked after Coburn, and he was in good shape on the day of the battle, which was pulled off at Bay St. Louis, Miss. There were about a thousand spectators, many sports from New York being present. Coburn had all the best of it in the early pat of the battle, sending Mace down repeatedly. Joe did not follow up his advantage, however, and after the man had stalled for three hours and a half Col. Rufus Hart, the referee, demanded that they do some eal fighting. As his warning went unheeded, Col. Hart stopped the fight.

Joe Coburn and his bother, Mickey Coburn, a famous lightweight of that period, ended their days in poverty. Both made lots of money, but spent it on the "great white way," and poor Joe was broke when he died. Coburn was never defeated in a ing, but he once took an awful beating in a street fight with Red Leary, a Cincinnati rough-and-tumble fighter, and, game as he was, Joe was also put on the run by Jim Hughes, another scrapper of the slaughter-house variety.

The Holland-America liner Ryndam, which went ashore at Gravesend after an accident which resulted in the death of three stokers, was floated.

CABARETS CAUSE 4 COLLEGE GIRLS TO QUIT SCHOOL

New York, Jan. 21—Visits to Broadway cabarets and midnight scampers up rear fire escapes into darkened rooms of Whittier Hall at Amsterdam avenue and One Hundred and Twentieth street, have ended the scholastic career of four girl students of Teachers' College, Columbia University.

The girls all first year students, are Misses Molly Crandall of No. 971 St. John's Place, Brooklyn; Marion Hofford of Dallas, Tex.; Hilda Johnsen of Greenport, L. I., said to have the largest allowance in the college, and Georgia Teeple of Fort Morgan, Col. Miss Teeple was the only one of the four left in the dormitory at Whittier Hall yesterday.

According to gossip at Columbia Miss Crandall, Miss Johnsen and Miss Teeple had been found one night before Christmas by the night watchman of the Hall, scaling up the shadowy fire escape at the rear of the building, one of their escorts helping them up. The escort descended, the rooms remained dark, but the girls were summoned before Miss Lucetta Dannall, Social Director, next day.

Discovered Another Entrance

Then, last Sunday night, Miss Hofford was discovered in the same feat by the same night watchman; the first time she had ever used the fire escape, it is said.

She left for her home early in the week in response to a telegram telling of the illness of a sister. It was admitted by officials yesterday that she was one of the four who had been advised that they could not continue their studies next semester.

The girls were told that they might go to other schools, to return to Teachers' College for degrees after two years of satisfactory behavior elsewhere. Miss Teepie, it was learned, will go to the Windymere School, at Saratoga Springs. The others, it was said, had gone home.

A rule at Whittier Hall forbids freshman girls to leave the dormitory except on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. They are compelled, if they return later than 10:30 o'clock, to sign a register, giving an explanation, with the time of their passing the large iron gates.

The four girls, however, discovered that a courtyard opening back from One Hundred and Twenty-first street gave access to a cement wall, shoulder high, which adjoined two abutting ends of the building at the rear. They scaled this wall in some fashion, walked down the stile steps on its inside and were at the foot of the fire-escapes which lead up, in a dark, angled recess, to all the floors.

Innocent Prank, Says Official

Certain of the college officials were loath to admit that the girls had been asked to leave. A reporter was told that "many girls left school at the end of each semester because they were not able to go on with their work." It was also said that "some of our girls seem to be more interested in seeing the gay side of New York than in their classes."

It was finally admitted that the girls had been told they could not remain for the rest of the year, and had not even been allowed to stay for the mid-year examinations, which begin in a few days.

"We never expel girls," one of the officials said, "but when we find out that girls are not equipped to finish the course or are not capable of meeting New York's temptations, we do not allow them to remain.

"The pranks of these four girls were innocent, of course. They are all young, from eighteen to twenty, and they meant no harm and did no serious harm. They did wrong, of course, in breaking a college rule, and for that, if for nothing else, they would have to leave.

"But nothing that has happened can be viewed as anything more than a prank, an indiscretion essentially harmless. They were unfortunate enough to come into the acquaintance of men who were not manly enough to protect them from themselves, and that is what is responsible for the whole affair."

Whether these men were Columbia students could not be learned.

Engineer J. L. Collier was killed and four trainmen hurt when the eastbound Rock Island California limited was derailed near Trenton, Mo.